

Mueller's "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria" - Is Volume 2 effectively published?

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Abstract

Court, A.B., Cowan, R.S. and Maslin, B.R. Mueller's "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria" - Is Volume 2 effectively published? *Nuytsia* 9 (3): 315-318 (1994). Historical notes are provided to support the conclusion that the second volume of this work was not effectively published and the new names it included are therefore invalid. A summary is appended that will be of assistance to librarians and bibliographers in understanding the chronology and content of the several publications concerned.

Introduction

Knowledge of the circumstances surrounding Mueller's (1863) controversial "publication" of volume 2 of "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria" (referred to as "Pl. Victoria" in the following text), is neither voluminous nor unequivocal. However, in connection with the preparation of the "Flora of Australia" account of *Acacia* we found it necessary to determine whether or not this title was effectively published in order to establish the status of the new names it contained. Very little other than *Acacia* is involved and the following discussion concerns only the taxa of this genus. The resumé at the end of the text summarises what is known of this and related publications.

Is Mueller's "Pl. Victoria" volume 2 effectively published?

In a particularly thorough paper Cavanagh (1988) traced the beginnings of scientific printing by Government Printer in Victoria, especially with reference to publications by F. Mueller. Using files of the Chief Secretary and of the Government Printer, as well as Mueller's annual reports for the period 1858-1862, Cavanagh was able to settle rather certainly the question of whether or not the "Pl. Victoria" had been issued in parts. He pointed out that publication in parts had been considered earlier when the purpose of the work was less ambitious, but was abandoned by January 1860 in favour of a more voluminous treatment of the flora. The first volume of "Pl. Victoria" appeared in February 1862, the date given on page 242 of the volume and accepted by Stafleu and Cowan (1981) as the date of publication.

Printing of the second volume began but was halted at the end of page 40, the end of the fifth fascicle, and descriptive work was deferred, as Mueller (1864-1865) wrote in his introduction to a volume of lithograms he published, "in order that precedence of publication may be given to the corresponding volumes on the universal empire of plants of Australia." This statement may be taken to mean that his time for working on his own projects had become so compromised by his cooperation with George Bentham in the production of "Flora Australiensis", that "Pl. Victoria" had to be at least temporarily put aside.

The printing of the fragment of volume 2 probably occurred between March and September 1863. This suggestion is based on the fact that Mueller cited *Acacia acanthoclada* in his "Fragmenta III" (published March 1863) and referred to it as having been published in volume 2 of the "Pl. Victoria"; he cited his *A. trineura* in the same way in "Fragmenta IV" (i.e. as having been published in "Pl. Victoria" vol. 2) which was published in September 1863. After printing of volume 2 had been discontinued, Mueller took a handful of broadsheets from the Government Printing Office and despatched a set to Bentham at Kew and possibly to another one or two European workers. Churchill *et al.* (1978), in a list of the published works of Mueller, noted: "Apparently distributed as page proofs by the author."

Court (1973) questioned the status of the names in this work in his unpublished "Australian *Acacia* Species Index". The "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature" (Art. 29) (Greuter *et al.* 1988) requires effective publication of botanical works for the validation of new names they contain and it defines effective publication (in part) as "only by distribution of printed matter (through sale, exchange or gift) to the general public or at least to botanical institutions with libraries accessible to botanists generally." In the case of Kew, the copy of the broadsheets sent to Bentham did not in itself constitute effective publication as defined by the "Code", for a library attached to the herbarium came into existence only with the purchase of Hooker's library after his death in 1865 (Perredes 1906). Consequently, we are of the opinion that Mueller's despatch of a set of broadsheets to one or a few close associates in Europe does not constitute effective publication of the names in that portion of volume 2. Indeed, it appears to us unlikely that Mueller had any intention of making generally available to anyone the first few pages of an aborted publication, certainly not "to the general public" or "to botanists generally". We therefore conclude that none of the new names which appear in volume 2 of Mueller's "Pl. Victoria" are valid because the work was not effectively published and that such names should date from their later publication.

***Acacia* taxa in Mueller's "Pl. Victoria" volume 2**

Mueller intended to publish four new species of *Acacia* in volume 2 of "Pl. Victoria", namely, *A. nyssophylla*, *A. subporosa*, *A. subtilinervis* and *A. trineura*; these names were validly published in September of the same year by Mueller (1863a) in his "Fragmenta". Names for two other new acacias were proposed by Mueller in volume 2 of "Pl. Victoria", namely, *A. pycnostachya* and *A. visciflua*. Even if they had been effectively published, neither name is valid, because Mueller advanced them merely as provisional names for taxa, should the species be accepted in the future (see Art. 34.1 of the "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature") (Greuter *et al.* 1988). *Acacia pycnostachya* was subsequently validated by Bentham (1864) but we know of no validation of the name *A. visciflua* (although it was cited as a synonym of *A. dodonaeifolia* by Bentham 1864).

Mueller's treatment of *A. longifolia* (Andrews) Willd. in this volume is more complicated, although the difficulties are more taxonomic than nomenclatural. He described what he considered to be the typical element of the species and then listed five earlier binomials (*A. sophorae* R. Br., *A. alpina* F. Muell., *A. floribunda* (Vent.) Willd., *A. mucronata* Willd. ex H.L. Wendl. and *A. linearis* Sims) and provided the new name, *A. phlebophylla* (based on *A. sophorae* var. *montana* F. Muell.), all of which he considered "varieties" of *A. longifolia*, although not actually making formal combinations as varieties. Bentham (1864) accepted four of the "varieties" at that rank but maintained the other two at the rank of species, namely *A. alpina* and *A. linearis*.

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Addendum

Because some botanists, bibliographers (including the authors of the second edition of "Taxonomic Literature"!) and librarians both here and overseas have not had access to the available data concerning "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria" and related publications, the following resumé is presented in an effort to help to clear away some of the confusion that has surrounded the listing of these works.

1. Mueller, F.J.H.: "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria". Volume 1. 1862. Issued as a complete volume February 1862; tabled before the Royal Society of Victoria on 28 April 1862.

We have accepted that this work was issued only as a complete volume in February 1862 but the possibility that it may have been issued in several parts is suggested by Mueller's "Second Systematic Census of Australian Plants" (1889). There he lists various species which were published in volume 1 with dates between 1860 and 1862.

2. Mueller, F.J.H.: "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria". Volume 2. 1863. Almost certainly printed during the period March to September 1863.

The final printing of this work stopped abruptly, although it is quite likely that Mueller had written considerably more of this volume. Preparation of copy for the work was well underway in 1862 and many plates had been prepared and apparently printed off for it. Plates which were intended for publication in this volume were cited by Mueller from time to time, particularly in his "Fragmenta". As pointed out above, the fragment of volume 2 cannot be regarded as published within the meaning of the rules in the "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature" and consequently it is not taken into consideration. Photocopies of volume 2 are in several herbaria, including K, MEL (J.Ross, pers. comm.) and PERTH.

3. Mueller, F.J.H.: "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria". Lithograms, 1864-1865. Precise date of issue is uncertain but it was mentioned in "The Journal of Botany" in August 1865.

In his Introduction to this volume, Mueller wrote: "This volume, illustrative of Victorian Plants, has been issued separately from the descriptive portion of the work [which] has been temporarily deferred, in order that precedence of publication may be given to the corresponding volumes on the universal empire of plants of Australia, emanating in London [Bentham's "Flora Australiensis"]". Mueller was concerned that abandoning his work, although perhaps only temporarily, denied the scientific fraternity access to the excellent plates that had been prepared. With this in mind Mueller issued a number of plates under the title of "Lithograms". Clearly, he was very careful not to call this publication volume II, particularly since he must have wanted to continue the work at a later date. Some workers, including librarians, quite erroneously catalogue this publication as "The Plants Indigenous to the Colony of Victoria", Volume II", but it must be emphasised that it is not Volume II and was never intended as such. Reference to Mueller's Introduction to this work shows very clearly that this is so.

From time to time, Mueller cited other plates intended for Volume II and future volumes but most of these remained unpublished until 1910 when A.J. Ewart gathered them together in a work entitled "Plants indigenous to Victoria", Volume II (see following entry). However, Mueller published a few plates over the years in some of his other works.

4. Ewart, A.J.: "Plants indigenous to Victoria". Volume II. 1910. The precise date of publication is uncertain but page 2 bears the date 30 June 1910.

Ewart realised the value of the unpublished plates that were intended for publication in Mueller's work and set about publishing them. Ewart gave a good account of these plates in his Preface and referred to their history. However, he somewhat confused the situation by titling his work "Plants indigenous to Victoria", Volume II. It should be noted that in the strict sense there is no Volume I of Ewart's work and that it stands alone.

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